

KING OF THE JUNGLE

BACKGROUND ON THE BATTLE

REVELATION 12:1-17

A war correspondent is to Journalism what a Navy Seal is to the United States military - or what an emergency room doctor is to the medical profession...

It's reporting on steroids - special-ops journalism.

A reporter is embedded with the troops... He wears camo and a flack jacket. He works in the line of fire.

His job is risky... It takes nerve... But because of his courage we get a unprecedented view of the battle. A war correspondent is committed to reporting the facts!

In this section of Revelation, John acts as **God's war correspondent**. He reports on *a spiritual battle* - in fact, *THE spiritual battle* - the battle of the ages - the war between God and Satan, and its culminating conflicts.

In Chapter 11 John is in Jerusalem, embedded with God's two witnesses. They're an olive branch of peace.

But Satan's madman murders them in the streets.

The treatment these men receive reveals the world's moral and spiritual bankruptcy. It's fitting that God's war correspondent files his report in **Chapter 11**.

Again in Chapter 13, John goes behind enemy lines to bring us an up-close and personal expose' on the emerging tyrant who slaughters the two witnesses.

John calls him *the Beast*. And thirteen is a chilling chapter... When all the animosity against God that's alive in the world today gets embodied in one person it becomes scary. Satan's true motivations are revealed.

But of all John's journalism chapter 12 may be his most important. John is embedded in a spiritual battle.

He knows that what plays out in chapters 11 and 13 are the culmination of a long-running conflict. The battle he's reporting on didn't just break out with the two witnesses. It's been brewing since the beginning...

John realizes that for us to really understand what's happening we need some **background on the battle**.

The Earth is in peril. Life as we know it is being threatened. The tiny people of Israel are the focal point of the conflict... **And the question that begs to be answered is - how did we get here?** This is where John takes a step back, and lays out an overview in Ch. 12.

Verse 1 reveals that the struggle of the ages begins with a woman... *And for husbands who didn't marry a gal as wonderful as I did, this comes as no surprise...*

Chapter 12 opens, **"Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars."** This is not just a woman. She's a lady. She's distinguished and prestigious - a spiritual debutante.

And that's not all. She's pregnant. **"Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth."**

Here's the first question, *who is this woman?*

Keep in mind, John wrote Revelation not just in the midst of a spiritual battle. His physical circumstances were also conflicted. He's a POW on a penal colony.

The evil Emperor Domitian tried to kill John - boil the dude in oil. The ole coot miraculously survived. Thus, Rome banished John to the rocky island of Patmos.

Understand, as he writes the Revelation he's surrounded by Roman guards. Prisoners had no rights to privacy - their letters were subject to censorship.

John doesn't want anything he writes to be seen as subversive, so he disguises his message in symbols.

John is a Hebrew, fluent in the OT, so the best way to decode his symbols is to refer to the Hebrew OT.

And where in the OT do we find this woman?

Genesis 37:9 quotes the Hebrew forefather, Joseph, "I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

That's when Joseph's dad, the Patriarch Jacob - who later has his name changed to "Israel" - asks Joseph...

"Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed bow down to the earth before you?" Joseph had eleven brothers - and in his dad's mind, they were all "stars."

Jacob rightly saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars as a reference to his own family. It's crystal clear biblically, the woman in Revelation 12 is the Jewish people.

A Bible teacher once told me, "You can learn a lot about a person's entire theology by how they interpret the woman in Revelation 12." And I've come to agree...

There are folks who interpret the woman of Chapter 12 as **the virgin Mary**. Since her child turns out to be Jesus it's understandable why Mary gets identified.

But Mary was a mother on Earth. Notice, the woman in chapter 12 is occupying Heaven. Mary was never pregnant in Heaven. She delivered her child on Earth.

Roman Catholics refer to Mary as "**the mother of God.**" This is a title the Bible never bestows. Mary mothered God's Son on Earth, but in Heaven she's one of many believers - *a child of God, not the mother of God*. Mary was a godly lady, but never make more of her than the Bible does. *She would be embarrassed.*

Other folks see this woman as **the Church**.

But this can't be. The Church didn't birth Jesus - just the opposite occurred, Jesus birthed His Church!

I believe strongly, this woman is none other than **the people of Israel!** John couches her in unmistakable symbolism. Joseph's dream affirms her identity.

It's interesting, humans stay pregnant for 9 months - rhinos for 15 months - elephants for 21 months...

Ladies, be glad you're not an elephant!

But realize, the nation Israel was pregnant with promise for 4000 years. God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - then later he promised King David -that through their collective lineage a Savior would be born. Salvation would come through their descendent.

Thus, Jesus was born of Jewish stock - with this pedigree of promise. He was the child of Lady Israel.

It seems to me that you can usually tell when a woman is pregnant. She radiates. She sparkles. A woman who's carrying a baby has a glow about her...

If I were President of the USA my first proclamation would be special treatment for all pregnant women.

Pregnant women could park in handicap spots... Go to the head of all check-out lines... All OB-GYN waiting rooms would be required to have chairs with extra padding... pregnant women would get control of the TV remote... *As long as it wasn't football season!...*

If you know a pregnant mom I hope you're treating her with extra special care... But that wasn't the case with the woman in Revelation 12. When she was ready to deliver she was threatened by a devouring dragon.

Verse 3, “**And another sign appeared in heaven; behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.**”

This appears to be something out of a Jurassic Park movie. *What Steven Spielberg could do with a seven-headed dragon!* The woman has some scary company.

As you well know, God has a triune nature. He is **one God in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

The true God is the great originator. But Satan is a copy cat. He's an imitator - an impersonator. Satan's Kingdom tries to come off like God's Kingdom - he seeks to fulfill his ambitions under a trio of leaders.

And in the next two chapters they're introduced.

Chapters 12-13 present the “Unholy Trinity” - “*the dragon,*” or Satan... “*the beast rising up out of the sea,*” or the Antichrist... and “*the beast coming up out of the earth,*” the Antichrist’s evil minion, the false prophet...

“*Seven heads and ten horns*” are associated with this unholy trinity - especially the **Beast** or *Antichrist*.

In Revelation 17:7 we’ll learn that “*the seven heads*” represent a **geographical place**. They’re seven hills.

In the writings of antiquity, Rome was almost always referred to as “*the city on seven hills.*” Apparently, the political entity that Satan seizes control of and uses in the last days is a revival of Rome. It’ll center in Europe.

“*Ten horns*” represent a **political base**. These horns were seen by the Prophet Daniel in 7:20. Evidently, the European confederacy that becomes Satan’s end times power block consists of ten nations or divisions.

The “*seven diadems,*” or laurel wreaths, speak of the victor’s crown. The authority and power welded by Satan and the Beast will be *wrestled* from the nations.

In verse 4 John gives a little of the dragon’s history.

“*His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.*” If you’re still having trouble identifying the dragon drop down to verse 9. John refers to him by name, “*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan...*”

The first time we see the devil in Genesis he appears in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve as a “*dragon.*” Of course, you’ll say, *I thought he came as a snake?*

He did, but when the serpent was cursed, *he belly flopped*. He ate dust and crawled on his stomach. We infer, that beforehand he must've had legs – *and what is a dragon, but a snake with legs!* This is why Chinese Restaurants creep me out. They're all decorated with dragons - the biblical and ancient symbol for Satan.

Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 provide us background on Satan. He was formerly an angel - *the archangel, Lucifer*. He was a beautiful, musical creature. Many people believe Lucifer was Heaven's worship leader.

That is, until pride entered his heart. At some point he stopped worshipping God and worshipped himself.

That's when God booted him off Heaven's worship team. In Luke 10:18 Jesus assumes His own pre-existence by saying, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Jesus was there at the demotion of Lucifer.

And it wasn't just Satan that fell, according to verse 4 we're told, he took "*a third of the stars of heaven*" with him. The "*stars of heaven*" is a biblical idiom for angels.

Reference Revelation 1:20 or Job 38:7. When Satan fell from heaven a third of God's angels joined the coup. Today the *fallen angels* are the *devil's demons*.

What a cast of characters in this battle of the ages... *a dragon - a beast - the stars... and a pregnant lady*.

As most of you know, over the last year, Kathy and I have gone from zero grandchildren to four grandkids.

Which means I've been around pregnant women a lot lately. And here's what I've noticed... *no matter how well they're treated the delivery can't come fast enough*. I'll

bet you've never met a woman who wasn't ready to birth her baby after 9 months of pregnancy?

A pregnant woman *glows*, but she also *grows*. Her limbs swell with water - the baby jabs his mom in the ribs - she can't tie her shoes - she waddles like a duck.

At times, those nine months seem like an eternity.

Ladies, just be glad you're not like the pregnant woman we find in Revelation 12! She stays pregnant for 4000 years... *and she's treated harshly*. Nothing goes smoothly. It's a high-risk pregnancy and delivery.

John tells us, verse 3, **“And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.”** The dragon stalks this lady until she gives birth - then he tries to pounce on her child! *That's no way to treat a mom and her baby!*

The Bible teaches us that the conflict between the dragon and woman began as far back as the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:15, when God cursed the serpent, He said, **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman.”** To this day, few women like snakes...

But here is where the plot thickens, **“and between your seed and her Seed...”** Now a woman doesn't have a seed. Obviously, the seed comes from the man.

Many Bible scholars interpret this idiom as Jesus' virgin birth. He was born without a man's help. He was uniquely the woman's seed... Thus, there's perpetual **“enmity”** or hostility between Jesus and the serpent.

In fact, Genesis 3 predicts the battle will reach a climax, “(Jesus) shall bruise the serpent’s head, and he shall bruise (Jesus’) heel.” The long-running conflict will be bloody and violent. The serpent, or the devil, will wound Jesus. *He’ll draw blood, but it won’t be fatal.*

In the big picture it’s nothing but a heel bruise.

It’s Jesus who will wield the decisive blow. On the cross He threw down His heavy sandal, and crush the serpent’s head. Jesus shattered Satan’s authority.

This is why Satan worked so hard to wipe out the Messiah before He was born. Quickly after Genesis 3, Satan went to work corrupting human hearts to the point of God regretted He had even created mankind...

I’m sure the dragon squealed with glee when he heard of God’s plan to destroy the world with water.

The devil thought he’d drowned out all hope of a Savior... But God spared a man of faith named Noah, and kept hope alive for a world plagued with sin.

When God narrowed the promise to a splinter of Noah’s family – Israel, the heirs of Abraham – Satan again went to work on the destruction of the promise.

And he thought he’d succeeded...

The Red Sea was on one side - the revenge seeking Egyptian army on the other... Surely the people of the promise would be annihilated once and for all.

But God worked a miracle and rolled back the waters. The Israelites walked to safety on dry ground.

After the promise narrowed to the lineage of David numerous attacks were launched on the royal family.

A wicked queen, Athalia, nearly wiped out the promise when she tried to kill all of David's heirs. She didn't know one of the boys was secretly hidden. He later was brought to power in a priestly coup d' that.

Jewish history is checkered with multiple near-misses - where Satan tried and failed to wipe out the promise before the woman could birth the Messiah.

By the time we get to Bethlehem the battle has seen its casualties. The struggle has been a bloody one.

Whenever we're in Israel we visit the Olive Wood Store. And the best buys are the Nativity sets.

How cool is it to purchase a Nativity carved in Bethlehem that your family will enjoy for generations.

Most Nativities come with a Mary, a Joseph, an angel, shepherds, a few barnyard animals. If you're a good haggler you can even get a few camels thrown in.

But I'll bet you've never seen a Nativity display with a dragon? Yet it's biblical. Here's the real nativity scene...

If you were in Heaven, looking down on the first Christmas, here's what you'd see, verse 3, *"The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born."*

The battle of the ages never negotiated a Christmas cease-fire. Messiah is born while a dragon with seven sets of sharp teeth stands nearby licking his chops.

Satan couldn't stand the thought that he'd one day bow to this baby. One author pens, "The dragon wants to eat the Child so he doesn't have to kiss His feet."

And sadly, it was this fiery dragon who inspired the evil King Herod to slaughter all the town's toddlers.

Ironically, the first Christmas-inspired song - the inaugural Christmas carol was sung by Bethlehem's grieving moms. Matthew 2:18 records the mourning...

"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

As John overviews the spiritual war of the ages, he correctly sees the birth of Jesus as the pivotal battle.

Apparently, Satan sensed it as well. That's why he was there in full dragon-mode to resist Jesus' coming...

This was the one victory that signaled a turning point in the whole war. Think of Christmas as a beachhead. *Christmas is Christianity's Normandy.* As one author put it, "The nativity was an all-out invasion on enemy-occupied territory. Every gun in the arsenal of darkness was aimed in the little baby's direction, yet He still triumphed." The Baby slipped behind enemy lines.

If Satan could've thwarted Jesus' birth, he could've kept God from invading his turf. If Jesus hadn't entered the world all of Satan's gains would've been assured.

Surely there were more skirmishes to come...

The battle continued after Jesus' birth... *A mob of angry legalists tried to push Him off a cliff in Nazareth...*

Demons tried to stir up a storm at sea to drown Him..

Jealous religious leaders plotted ways to kill Him...

Another King Herod beheaded His friend, John...

Jews and Romans conspired to flog and crucify Jesus... They even block up His grave with a stone...

But as John sees it, when the *“male-Child”* was born at Christmas, it was the beginning of the end for Satan.

With Jesus in the world it was only a matter of time.

The dominoes started to fall... *His sinless life, His miracles, His teachings, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension, the establishment of the Church...* It all leads to Jesus' inevitable triumph...

Verse 5 tells us, *“She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.”* Here's language right out of Psalm 2:8-9. God speaks to His coming King, *“Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”*

The Child promised to Israel, and born in Bethlehem, will rule the nations with a rod of iron. This is what all history is barreling toward - *the kingdom of the Christ!*

When Jesus returns to Earth it'll be His way or the highway. Allegiance will be mandatory. Jesus isn't running for office. He's not campaigning for votes. It's a jungle out there, but Jesus is the King of the Jungle!

Ultimately, **the male-Child** will rule all the nations of the world, but what about **the woman** who birthed Him? What will happen to the Jewish people?

John tells us in verse 6, “**Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there 1,260 days.**”

Here John fast-forwards from the time of Christ to the end of the age - from 32 AD to a time still future.

If this were a movie a caption would appear between verses 5 and 6 that read, “**Thousands of years later...**”

The timeframe “**1,260 days**” refers to the scene we studied in Revelation 11. The Hebrew Prophet Daniel saw a final period of 7 years in which God will wrap up His plans for His people Israel, and the world at large.

Daniel 9 tells us it starts with a treaty. A Roman leader will strike a deal with the Jews. At that point you can mark off 7 years to the day of Messiah’s return.

Daniel also tells us that a terrible deed will occur at the midpoint, at the 1,260 day mark. The leader Israel trusted, enters the Temple and desecrates God’s altar.

This violates the promise made to the Jews. And the betrayal scares Lady Israel. She flees into the desert to a refuge God has specifically prepared. She’ll be supernaturally fed and protected for a final 42 months.

Recall after the Hebrews exited Egypt, God fed them in the desert for 40 years. *He can handle 42 months.*

It'll be like Elijah - when he was a fugitive from King Ahab. God hid him in the wilderness, and catered him two meals a day. He had the meals flown in on beaks and talons. A flock of ravens delivered bread and meat.

If God can take care of the Israelites and a prophet, He can protect and provide for these future Jews.

At the midway point of this final seven years, whatever crime the Roman leader commits it'll not only scare the Lady on Earth, it causes turmoil in Heaven...

Verse 7, “**And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.**” I'll bet this is the moment Michael has been awaiting for centuries.

Michael is a warrior angel. He's one bad hombre. According to Daniel 12:1 he's fiercely loyal to the Jews.

He's also tangled with the devil on at least two other occasions - *check out Daniel 10 and Jude 9.*

On top of that, he's had to listen to Satan whenever he's approached God's throne. Satan still has access.

Read Job 1-2. He still comes before God's throne.

And I'm sure Michael is weary of hearing Satan bring stuff up that's been blotted out by the blood of Jesus. It's an insult to God's grace and to the cross of Christ.

I'll bet Michael has been biding his time. Every time Satan appears he mumbles a request under his breath, “**Lord, when can I take out this chump once and for all.**”

Well, at the midpoint of this final seven year period, Satan goes too far. Revelation 13 tells us his partner, **the Beast**, sets up his own image in the Temple - and claims to be god. He requires the world to worship him.

This is when war breaks out in heaven... *And what this war looks like... who knows?* How do angels and demons do combat? I'll bet its vicious. It makes an MMA cage fight look like a ballet dance... It's a good thing that Michael, and the angels loyal to God, have Satan and his demons outnumbered two to one.

All I know is in 2 Kings 19 a single angel killed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night. Angels have serious swag. Imagine, a Battle Royale in Heaven...

Galactic heavyweights go toe-to-toe. Whatever occurs makes a Star Wars movie look like a dart throw.

In the end Michael's troops trump Satan's hellish forces. They kick Satan out of heaven once and for all.

From this point on a beat-up Satan swipes his pass to heaven, and the monitor reads, **“access denied.”**

Verse 9 sums it up, **“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”**

This is the beginning of the Great Deceiver's unveiling. He's finally exposed. The devil has lied, and intimidated, and manipulated for thousands of years.

He's twisted God's Word. He's added to, and taken from... His lies have kept mankind blind to the truth.

I hope you're not under Satan's sway yourself this morning. But if you've not been immersed in God's Word there's a good chance you are. We all need to challenge every assumption we hold with biblical truth.

Ephesians 4:23 commands us, **"be renewed in the spirit of your mind."** We need transformed attitudes. Not ones tainted with Satan's lies and misconceptions.

A verse in Isaiah 14 speaks of Satan when we finally lay eyes on him, **"Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities...'"**

"Is this the man?" Satan is a defeated foe. He was stripped of his power at the cross. He's become puny and feeble. When we see him it'll suddenly dawn on us the only power Satan had *was the power we gave him!*

We allowed a bully to push us around because we believed his lies, and lacked the faith to resist him.

Obviously, no one in Heaven is crying over Satan's banishment. In verse 10 Heaven erupts in joy and praise, **"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.'"**

The name **"Satan"** means **"adversary"** - **"Devil"** means **"accuser."** Satan is a condemnation junkie.

God is rich in mercy; whereas the Devil is quick to remind us of our sin. He stirs up guilt when God offers grace. Satan can bury you under an avalanche of condemnation the moment God wants to forgive you.

Jesus was buried so you and I don't have to be! He died in our place so God could pardon us forever.

Hang your hopes on Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ..."

Don't let Satan use *your failure* to destroy *your faith*.

Here's a quote to memorize, "Whenever the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future."

Our keys to victory are in verse 11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." Here's how you build a strong faith – a faith that overcomes the devil's lies and condemnation.

You cultivate three attitudes... First, you lean on "*the blood of the Lamb!*" God's power is in the blood!

Sin is real. The death it causes is real - *not just theoretical, but real*. And the antidote is just as real.

If you were a Jew you'd know this in your gut! Each time you sinned you brought a little lamb to the Temple.

You watch the priest confess your sins over the lamb, then slit its throat with a meat cleaver. The lamb was innocent. *You sinned, not the lamb*. Yet you sit there and

watch it whimper, buckle, and drop dead... *I hope you're happy with the sin you've committed!*

A Jew raised in the Temple would never take sin lightly. He was well aware of the necessity of the blood.

The same is truth with the blood of Jesus. We have good days and bad, but His blood is always sufficient. Trust in His blood and your faith will grow stronger.

The second attitude that helped them overcome was *"the word of their testimony."* It's been said, *"A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument."* I remember the day, the time, the exact place – when I knelt and committed my life to Jesus.

I was there! It was real. There's no denying a testimony. But without a time and a place – you have no landmarks. You'll wander from *where you've been*.

You'll grow confused over *who you are* and *where you're headed*. Every Christian needs to nail down their testimony. Be able to articulate where they stand.

And the third attitude that makes a strong faith is a selfless life. *"They did not love their lives to the death."*

Overcomers know there're things more vital than life.

Pleasing Jesus and glorifying God is far more important than my next breath. *Treasure in Heaven, the power of God's Word, the souls of people around me* are of greater worth than what I'll get out of this life.

It's said, *"You don't start living until you're first ready to die"* Knowing what matters most helps us overcome.

A crowd now appears in Heaven. These are the men and women who struggled with Satan, and triumphed.

That's why they know what to expect from him.

Verse 12, "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." This is not a good time to be alive on the planet. From here on out Satan goes on the warpath. A typically unbridled Satan now flies totally off the chain!

You think the Devil is vile and vicious now – just wait until Michael and the angels boot him out of heaven. He'll act like a death-row escapee with nothing to lose!

Seething, frothing with resentment Satan will try to strike back at God as viciously and violently as he possibly can. He'll go for the jugular. He tries to hit God where it hurts Him most... *and guess where he aims?*

Hey, if you wanted to hurt me just go after my kids!

I'd die a thousand deaths before I'd see any harm come to my children. This is Satan's vengeful strategy.

He goes after God's kids still on Earth - the Jews.

I believe all forms of prejudice and bigotry are sinful, but in my opinion there's something especially sinister about Anti-semitism. *Satan hates whoever God loves...*

The Devil crucified Jesus, but now Jesus is out of his reach in Heaven... He persecuted the Church, and does so now - but the rapture takes us out of his grasp.

Now that the Lord and His Church are no longer vulnerable, Satan zeroes in on the people group God chose to favor in the past, and in the future - the Jews.

Satan will try to destroy *“the woman”* who birthed the *“male-Child.”* Satan is no gentleman. He’ll try to rough up Lady Israel. He’s never learned you don’t hit girls.

This is what we’re told in verse 13, *“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.”* His evil reflex is to attack God’s people, Israel.

Remember what Jesus told the Jews in Matthew 24:16. When you see the Antichrist defile the Temple *“let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”* *Run for the hills...* Terrible persecution is on the horizon.

Verse 14, *“But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place...”* God will give her wings to protect herself. With speed and agility the Jews will vacate Jerusalem.

Some folks identify *“a great eagle”* as a first century description of a modern day military transport plane.

Perhaps the Jews left in Jerusalem will get airlifted.

There is a passage that may identify the location of the end times hideout God has prepared for the Jews.

Isaiah 16:3-5 predict, *“Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end.”*

In Isaiah 16:1 the prophet also mentions the Moabite city of *“Sela”* or *“Petra.”* You’ve seen this city if you viewed, *“Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.”* Petra was the backdrop used for the movie’s final scenes.

The city of Petra is in a valley about a mile square.

It's secluded because of the canyon that serves as its entrance. The canyon is a mile long, by a few feet wide. Its narrowness makes it easily defensible.

This may be where God keeps the Jews out of Satan's reach during the last half of this terrible time.

Certainly, it's in the wilderness somewhere that the woman "is nourished for a time and times and half a time..." Here's the third way John earmarks the same timeframe... 1,260 days - 42 months - and now with a familiar Hebrew idiom - a phrase that equals 3.5 years.

For one time, then two times (times plural), and then for a half a time - 3.5 times or 3.5 years - God will protect the Jews "from the presence of the serpent."

Yet after the Jews evacuation, Satan opts for Plan B... Verse 15, "So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood." "A flood" is another biblical idiom - used for an invading army.

This could be the Antichrist's genocide squad sent to Petra to exterminate the Jews who dared to flee.

We'll talk more about him next week, but Antichrist comes to power claiming to befriend the Jews - instead He turns into a Hitler-type that tries to annihilate them.

In verse 16 God again comes to their rescue. "But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had

spewed out of his mouth.” Sounds like a Middle East earthquake at the right time and the right place...

A fissure in the Earth’s crust rescues the Jews.

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” As we’ve mentioned, there will be Gentiles saved during the Great Tribulation.

And they’ll also be targeted for harsh treatment.

After the dragon fails to spill Jewish blood, he’ll go after anybody who’s embraced Jesus as the Christ.

And this is John’s point... until Jesus returns there’ll always be a battle raging... This war is nothing new.

Right not you may be in it. It’ll over soon enough...

But for the moment *trust in the blood of Jesus, nail down your testimony, settle what matters most.* It’s a jungle out there, but Jesus is the King of the Jungle!